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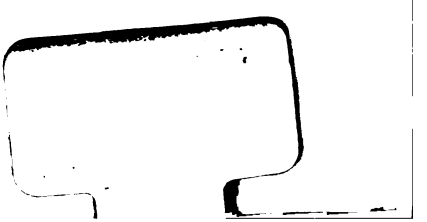
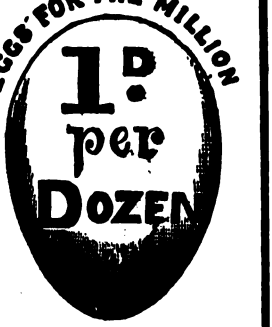


23rd Edition, 23rd Thousand.

TO THE

FARMERS AND COTTAGERS

OF GREAT BRITAIN.



HOW THE FRENCH MAKE

FOWLS PAY

A PROFIT OF

300 PER CENT. PER ANNUM.

PRODUCING

FAT YOUNG FOWLS . . . at 3d. per lb.
EGGS (Winter and Summer) . at 1d. per doz.

BY

KINARD B. EDWARDS.

Part. T.

PRICE 6d

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PUBLISHED BY THOMAS BOSWORTH, 198, HIGH HOLBORN.

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1871.

Price Sixpence.

DEDICATION.

TO THE POORER CLASSES SPECIALLY,

AND

TO THE PUBLIC GENERALLY,

I Dedicate this Treatise,

WITH A SINCERE DESIRE

THAT THE FORMER MAY BE BENEFITED

BY THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN,

AND THAT THE LATTER,

IN CONSEQUENCE OF AN INCREASED SUPPLY,

MAY MORE FREQUENTLY ENJOY A VALUABLE ARTICLE OF FOOD.

THE AUTHOR.

There is no way of helping the poor so beneficial as disseminating such knowledge as will enable them to obtain an honest living. The dispensing of alms (however munificent) has a degrading effect upon the recipient, and the relief lasts but for the moment; whereas to impart the means of "Self-Help" is to elevate the mind, and its effects are lasting.

PREFACE.

In presenting this little treatise to the Public, I am not unmindful of the old proverb which says, "There is nothing new under the sun," or of the fact, that from the time of Columella (over 2,000 years ago) to the present day, endless and exhaustive works and treatises have been written upon the feathered tribe in general, and the domestic fowl in particular.

In many of these works, no doubt, much, if not all, that I now give to the Public may be found scattered here and there; but these works have been as sealed books, so far as the lower and many of the middle classes are concerned.

It is now generally acknowledged that it is only by *brevity*, combined with *cheapness*, that knowledge, through print, can be imparted to the multitude; and it is the absence of these two *essentials* in the numerous works published, that has induced me to collect together as briefly and cheaply as possible, those requirements which I find least practised and understood, in the economical and profitable rearing of Poultry.

This treatise may be considered dogmatic. In reply to this, I say that it is written for a class that requires dogmatic teaching. Besides this, it is so only when the matter agrees with the opinion of the most practical investigators of the past and present time. The Library of the British Museum (to which I have had unlimited access) will enable those who wish to test my statements, to do so, and also to obtain in detail much that I have only been able to give briefly.

On the score of economy, I hope eventually to be able to place this pamphlet within the reach of all, by publishing it at 1d. As for profit, I ask none; I shall be amply repaid if I prove the means of increasing the production of a valuable article of food and bring a luxury to the poor man's board.*

The fact that we *import* annually into this country no less than 500,000,000 (yes, millions!) of eggs,† and thousands of *tons* of Poultry, representing over three millions of pounds sterling, is in itself a sufficient apology for my endeavour to show that we can, if we choose, not only supply what we now import, but supply the demand should it increase tenfold; and by so doing, circulate millions of money annually among our labouring classes.

I am quite prepared to expect that this pamphlet will be subjected both to criticism from connoisseurs and ridicule from those who are prejudiced or ignorant on the matter treated of. All I can say is, that I am fully prepared, if necessary, to prove all my statements. But I trust that the class for which I chiefly write will in confidence accept

what I say, seeing that I quote the greatest authorities of the day in confirmation of the system I advocate. With these remarks I will conclude, not desiring to split hairs with any one upon any statement made, or to assert that my remarks are *everywhere* applicable. What I do assert is, they are correct in theory as well as practice, and are *generally* applicable to all. Exceptions will but prove the rule, and confirm the truth of what I have said.

By brevity, cheapness, and a clear and true statement of facts, I hope to disseminate such information among the multitude as will be the means of giving employment to the poor, and so to add to the nation's wealth.‡

K. B. EDWARDS.

Sarn Fawr, Bridgend, 1871.

PREFACE TO LATER EDITIONS.

It is now nine months since this pamphlet appeared. I then little thought that before the close of the year 50,000 copies would have been sold, and its pages be scanned by probably half a million of people. From the tenor of the many letters that I have received (upwards of 4,000 in number), I am led to believe that one object I had in view has been in a measure realised, and that a large number of our poorer population, who have acted upon the instruction it contained, have benefited thereby.

The correspondence that has appeared on this subject in many of our leading journals, coupled with the experience of my many correspondents, convinces me more than ever of the soundness of the system advocated, and the results that may be obtained. I have, however, from prudential motives, somewhat modified my figures in the present edition, and generally revised the whole work.

There will be found plenty ready to laugh and sneer at the statements made herein, but for every 100 who are ready to do this, there will not be found one able to prove my statements false, either by argument or their own experience.

THE AUTHOR.

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* Copies of this pamphlet may now be obtained *from the Author* at half price by the dozen. This is found to be as low as they can be published for, the expenses of printing and publishing and advertising being so great.

† To give an idea of the number of eggs annually imported into this country, I may mention the following : Taking the length of an egg at 2¼ inches, I find, on calculation, that if the eggs imported last year were strung together, they would reach 20,000 miles, or nearly the entire circumference of the earth.

I have also made the following interesting calculation, viz. : Supposing all the eggs to be hatched, and one-half to produce pullets, *the offspring of a single cock and hen* will, in three years, increase to over 200,000,000 fowls (two hundred millions), and in five years to 20,101,000,000!!! Any mathematician will confirm the truth of this.

‡ The notes throughout are *meant* to be read; they tend to fortify and confirm the truth of the statements made.

A CODE ON POULTRY-KEEPING.

Showing how every Pullet reared may be made to return a Profit of £1 in Eighteen Months.

THE French are pre-eminently celebrated for their Poultry, both as to the quality and quantity they produce.

The principle adopted by them in their successful and economical rearing may be explained in a few words—early hatching, early killing, liberal feeding, stimulating food, both for fattening and egg-producing. They keep only the best breeds, celebrated either as egg-layers, or quick growth to maturity; they keep their stock always young, and by liberal feeding with stimulating food, both flesh and eggs are produced with the regularity of machinery; risk of disease being prevented by the rapidity with which they fatten and realize, keeping up a constant succession.

The Domestic Fowl is admittedly of all birds the most generally useful; but although so commonly kept, and highly appreciated, it is quite a rare exception to find any in this country who know how to rear, and keep them profitably, even at the exorbitant prices they at present command.

The object in keeping Poultry should be to produce their flesh and eggs as *expeditiously* as possible, and at the *smallest* cost; and it is only from want of proper knowledge of their management that eggs and poultry are the rich man's delicacy, rather than what they should be—food for the million. I say want of knowledge alone, because no greater trouble, and far *less* expense, is involved in making them a source of profit than of loss.*

The common plan amongst farmers and cottagers is to keep fowls indiscriminately year after year, of various breeds, sizes and ages, feeding them irregularly, generally insufficiently, sometimes not at all; bestowing little or no care upon them, their wants, or comforts; chickens being hatched at all times throughout the summer, late rather than early.

Now the pullet chickens so reared, with the exception of the very few that may be hatched in March, or early in April, are fed, and make no return whatever, until the following spring or summer, involving on an average *ten months'* unprofitable keep, before they produce eggs; and even then, often owing to insufficiency of food, degeneracy of breed, and want of proper care, produce less than one-half the eggs they otherwise would, or are capable of doing; and further, produce their

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* Fowls should be looked upon as mere machines for converting one material of smaller value into another of greater value. A man who expects a good return of flesh and eggs from fowls insufficiently fed and cared for, is like a miller expecting to get meal from a neglected mill, to which he does not supply grain.

eggs at a time when they only command the lowest price, returning thereby often but little more than the cost of the food they consume.

So with the cockerel chickens (except those few hatched early in the spring), they are not considered sufficiently large and full-grown to kill before the following spring; for unless they are fit to dispose of about harvest time, they are not likely to improve in condition as the winter comes on; their age increases, and their appetites become voracious. They are consequently kept until the following spring, when they have attained the age of nine or ten months, or nearly their full growth; but by this time it will be found, on calculation, that the cost of their food will have exceeded the value of the fowl sold.

With *such* management it may be *truly* said that "Poultry don't pay."

I will now as briefly as possible explain a system whereby fowls may be kept, and made to return a *quick* and *certain* profit—larger profit indeed than any other farm stock possibly can; and with the greatest of all advantages, requiring but the most trifling outlay. *

The principles to be acted upon are these:—

1st. Good stock, size of frame, and delicacy of flesh, combined, for producing *cockerels;* early and productive layers for producing *pullets.*

2nd. *Regularity* and *liberality* of feeding, combined with general care and attention.

3rd. Hatch *pullet* chickens *only* during the months of March and April.

4th. Encourage by proper feeding every pullet to lay as soon as she attains the age of six months.

5th. Always fatten and dispose of your hens at about nineteen months old, just before their first (adult) moult.

6th. Never allow a cockerel to *exceed* the age of 4 months before being fatted and disposed of.

By such a system it will be found that *every* pullet reared becomes a source of profit at the age of *six* months, and every cockerel at the age of 4 months. During these months of chickenhood they cost but *very little* to keep.†

The cost of a chicken during the first two months of its existence does not, *certainly* need not, exceed ½d. per week; the second two months ¾d., and afterwards 1d. per week; making the total cost of a

* There is no family, rich or poor, living in the country or town suburb, that may not with advantage keep poultry. It must with ordinary care prove highly remunerative, and be a means of consuming quantities of kitchen and table refuse, which in suburban houses and cottages is often thrown away.

† The return made for their food up to this time is *enormous;* but after this it will steadily decrease, and before the cockerels are full-grown, they will not pay for their keep.

Mr. Mechi also says that he cannot understand upon what grounds farmers can say that poultry do not pay, when the selling price of beef, mutton, and pork is only 4½d. per lb., and fowl 1s. "I am sure (he says) it costs no more to produce a pound of fowl than a pound of beef or mutton. The whole question of producing more poultry is a national and important one. Commend me to poultry as the farmers' best friend."

pullet to the time she becomes profitable, 1s. 6d., and that of a cockerel only 1s. 2d. From the time a pullet commences to lay, she should, on an average, during the following twelve months, produce say 186 eggs;* one-half of which will be produced during the dearest time (winter), making the average value of her eggs, at 1s. 2d. per dozen, a total of 18s. 1d.†

After producing this quantity of eggs, and directly before her moulting sets in, she must be cooped for a fortnight and fatted, when she will be worth from 2s. 0d. to 2s. 3d., or 6d. per lb.‡, as she will weigh at least 4½ lbs., and not exceed 18 months in age. By now disposing of her, you save the expense of an often protracted moulting season§, and a winter of unprofitable keep; disposing of her carcase before age has deteriorated its value; and you also make room for the next succession of pullets, reared the past spring, and now about to commence laying.

The profit and loss account will stand thus:—

Dr.	s.	d.	Cr.	£	s.	d.
Cost of Eggs	0	1	186 new laid eggs at 1s. 2d. per dozen .		18	1
Cost of rearing chicken to egg-producing time .	1	6	Produce of fowl, 4½ lb. at 6d. per lb.. . .	0	2	3
Cost of feeding during the 11 months she is laying, at 1d. per week . . .	3	11	Excrements, 19 months at 5s. per cwt. . .	0	1	8
	5	6		£1	2	0
			Deduct cost.....	0	5	6
			Total profit	£0	16	6

* 186 eggs during 365 days is *certainly* a very moderate estimate on which to base our calculations. Stephens, in his celebrated *Book of the Farm*, speaks of an egg-producing establishment near Paris, where no less than 100,000 hens are kept, the average number of eggs produced annually by each fowl is 300. Horseflesh is here largely used as a stimulating food, and without any ill effects. 180 days, or 6 months, is ample allowance for non-productive days. The average yield from the Hamburgh breed would be at least 250. Two authorities, writing lately to a poultry journal, say, the one, "My Hamburghs, although kept in *close confinement*, average 220 eggs to each bird;" the other, "I can thoroughly confirm Mr. E.'s statements; my 70 hens on 1d. per week average over 220 eggs per bird." The eminent authorities and writers, James Dickson and Captain Hornby, place the average yield of Hamburghs at 240, and Spanish at 210.

† This average price may be obtained in any of the large towns in England. Indeed, although I live in the depths of Wales, I am able to dispose of all my eggs by contract by the year at a *fixed* price of 1s. 3d. per dozen.

‡ A young hen in good condition ought certainly *everywhere* to command per lb. the price of a neck of mutton.

§ Fowls are often from two to three months before they thoroughly regain their feathers, and the later they moult, the longer and more severe it becomes, and in cold weather they seldom commence again to lay for some months after regaining them. After twelve months' prolific production of eggs, followed by the severe ordeal of moulting, it is but reasonable to expect that a fowl will re-

Leaving a profit on each pullet of 16s. 6d., or over 200 per cent. The profit and loss account on the cockerels will be as follows:—

Dr.	£	s.	d.	Cr.	£	s.	d.
Cost of egg	0	0	1	Value of cockerel, weight 4½ lbs., at 9½ per lb. .	0	3	6
Cost of rearing and fattening to the age of 4 months . . .	0	1	3	‖Excrements (4 months) at 5s. per cwt. . .	0	0	4½
	£0	1	4		0	3	10½
				Deduct cost.....	0	1	4
				Total profit....	£0	2	6½

Leaving a profit on each cockerel of 2s. 6½d., or nearly 100 per cent. in 4 months, or 300 per cent. if followed by two successions through the summer.

Now, from actual experiments, it has been proved *over and over again*, that the finest fowls can be kept in the highest state of perfection at the cost of 1d. to 1½d. per week; * and this, without even the advantage of anything of a run, beyond an enclosed yard or small garden. This sum will allow of the best quality of food being given, and such will always prove the cheapest.

Wheat at 6s. 0d., barley at 4s. 8d., oats 3s., buckwheat 5s. 0d., maize 4s. 6d. per bushel; broken rice, 1½d. per lb.; small potatoes (siftings), 2s. 6d. per cwt.; bullock's liver and sheep's pluck, 2d. per lb.; will enable you to keep your fowls in the highest possible perfection, within the price named,† averaging the value of one grain against another.

To encourage and keep the pullets laying through the winter months, it is *necessary* that they should be kept warm at night, fed liberally, and on stimulating food. In the morning each pullet should have 1½ oz.

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quire a certain amount of rest. I have always found that 5 lbs. of barley or other meal (together with potatoes) moistened with milk, is sufficient to fatten any fowl during the 14 days she is cooped.

‖ A fowl will void at least 1 oz. of dry dung in 24 hours, and which is worth 7s. per cwt. (*Stephens*)—allowing for waste, say 5s.; and those who cannot find a market for this valuable manure at such a price, let them use it themselves in their own gardens, and make *as much again*. I can speak with confidence of the power of 1 cwt. to produce 4cwt. of potatoes, value £1.

* Those who doubt the sufficiency of such allowance had better refer to Mr. Mowbray's standard work, or to the comprehensive experiments of M. Réaumer, M. Parmentier, &c. I can certify to its sufficiency from my own experience, having kept nearly 100 *large* fowls during the past twelve months upon a weighed and measured allowance of food, and which never exceeded 1d. per week. They were the whole time in laying condition, and in the highest state of perfection as to plumage, &c.

† In Ireland, Scotland, and parts of Wales, where fowls can have liberty, and milk and potatoes are plentiful and cheap (as well as corn), fowls may be kept at probably one-half the cost named. It is owing to the liberal feeding of warm potatoes, accompanied with *warm housing*, that the poultry in Ireland are good egg-producers, and this, in spite of the most miserable, puny breeds, deteriorating year after year from breeding in and in, and with absence of fresh blood.

of barley, buckwheat, or meal; mid-day, boiled potatoes warm, or boiled rice, with scraps of meat, suet, or fat, bullock's liver, or sheep's pluck; at night, 1½ oz. of wheat, Indian corn, or heavy oats. Such feeding will keep them in such a condition as will enable them to continue to lay regularly until the spring, when 2 or 2½ oz. of grain, or meal, per day may be resorted to, without the assistance of meat or cooked food.

Fowls in winter, owing to the absence of worms, grubs, flies, &c., depend more on hand-feeding than in summer, but where they have the advantage of an extended run, 1d. per week will be found an *ample* allowance, and allow for liberal feeding, of the best food, averaging winter against the summer.

A wise selection of stock, and such as may be suited to your soil, is of paramount importance. The Houdan, Creve, Dorking, and Brahma are all excellent for the table, and come early to maturity, being easily fattened. The Hamburghs, Houdans, Polands, Spanish, Brahma, and Cochin excel as egg-layers, all except the two latter being non-sitters.

Two or three hatches of cockerel chicks may with advantage be made throughout the summer*, as they only require four months before they are fit to be disposed of.† A succession may, therefore, always be kept up ready for the coop, and thus a large number may be disposed of in the year, without having any quantity on hand at one time; and in this way one's limited capital may be continually turned over, each time realizing 100 per cent., or 300 per cent. if followed by two successions through the summer.‡

* Those who desire to act upon the best and *most economical* principles will avoid the expense involved by allowing a hen to rear her own chickens, which will amount in eight weeks, by loss of eggs and keep, to 4s. 8d. A Capon may be easily trained to undertake the brooding and rearing of chickens as well as the best hen. A large, full-feathered Capon can brood and care twenty-five to thirty chickens at a time, and will continue the careful charge of *brood after brood throughout the year*, irrespective of age, size, or colour.—*Mascal, Réaumer, Parmentier, Geyelin.*

Chickens may also be reared by what is termed an "artificial" mother, which is a simply-constructed shallow box, the perforated lid being lined with lamb's-skin, or goose-down, and by the application of heat to the lid, either by hot water or hot air, chickens in any number can be reared, with far greater ease and certainty than by the natural mother. The author will be glad to furnish particulars as to the training of Capons, or show a plan of rearing-box or "artificial" mother.—*Réaumer, Bonnemain, Parmentier, Geyelin.*

† So precocious are the Creve Cœur fowls in their growth and disposition to fatten, that they are fit to be put up to fatten at the age of two and a-half to three months, and be ready for table fifteen days after.—*Pringle, Murray, Geyelin.*

‡ No doubt it will be considered a bold assertion to say that fowls are capable of making a return of 300 per cent. in twelve months, at a time when the popular belief is that "Poultry don't pay." It is true that fowls don't pay as often managed, but, at the same time, I affirm, without fear of contradiction, that they can be made to pay, and to pay as no other stock possibly can. Let a farmer care for his cows and pigs as he does for his poultry, and he will find they also "don't pay"; let him house them in a confined, ill-ventilated house, clean them once a-year, and feed them occasionally upon a little *light* corn, or other *refuse*, if such is on hand, and if not, let them "do for themselves," and at the end of twelve months (if his cows and pigs are alive at all) let him say if they pay him better than his fowls.—*Stephens' Book of the Farm.*

As cockerels are more profitable than pullets to fatten, owing to their hardiness and extra size,* it will be well to hatch as many of this sex as possible for this purpose.†

In hatching chickens for the purpose of producing eggs, it is very important to select eggs *only* from those hens that have proved themselves prolific egg-producers; egg-laying is often as much a speciality of individual *birds* as it is of particular *breeds;* in the same way the *offspring* of individual cows celebrated as milkers very generally inherit their good qualities.

It is always well to keep a few large full-feathered Cochins for hatching purposes, they being only too often ready to undertake the task. They are also the best for hatching duck's eggs. A passing remark as to ducks will not be out of place. Never be so foolish or extravagant as to keep a drake and two ducks (as many people do) throughout the year, for the purpose of supplying a brood or two of ducks in the spring; these three ducks will cost you, through the twelve months you keep them, not less than 2½d. per week each (probably more); this in twelve months will amount to 1*l.* 12s. 6d. The proverb says: "Fools build houses for wise men to live in," so let fools keep ducks to supply the wise with eggs. A sitting of eggs can generally be procured for 1s. per dozen. Ducks are most voracious, and there is no satisfying their craving appetites. The best eggs to procure are the Brazilian and Rouen. From my own observation of them in Brazil, I can speak as to their being ready for the table at ten weeks old.

In my calculations of profit I have taken no account whatever of the great benefit obtained by fowls from the destruction of innumerable worms, grubs, flies, beetles, insects, &c., and which Mr. Mechi (no mean authority) considers invaluable. Nor have I taken into consideration the value of their feathers when killed, or of the (occasional only, it may be) high and fancy price that may be obtained in disposing of one's best birds for stock purposes, as well as eggs for hatching; and indeed, where really good stock is *known* to be kept, applications for such will soon prove numerous; and this last item is often found important and highly remunerative, and it in no way interferes with the general routine of market business.‡

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* The flesh of large fowls may be as delicate, juicy, and well-flavoured as that of smaller breeds. It is as absurd to say larger breeds must necessarily be inferior, as to say that the splendid prize breeds of Leicester sheep, or shorthorn oxen, must be coarse owing to their size. The best-shaped and most delicately-flavoured chicken I ever ate was a cross between a large Brahma cock and Dorking hen, and weighed at the age of four months 6 lbs.

† Select only those eggs pointed at the ends, avoiding any that have a tendency to roundness of form; also examine the position of the air cavities in the eggs, and only retain those that have them placed directly at the apex of the blunt or larger end, avoiding all that have them placed at all to the side. In this way eight eggs out of ten will produce cockerels.—*Columella, Mascal, Stephanus, Réaumer, Parmentier, Stephens, Sketchley, &c.*

‡ Last spring I sent to all parts of England and Scotland upwards of 2,000 eggs from my best birds for hatching purposes, and so far as I have learned an average of eight or nine from each sitting, hatched strong chickens. No one should purchase eggs, unless a *guarantee* is given that at *least* one half the eggs shall prove fertile; this would save the tampering so often complained of.

GENERAL SUMMARY AS TO THE REASON WHY.

IN QUESTION AND ANSWER.

Q. Why is it important to keep none but the best stock, instead of small, mixed, mongrel breeds?

A. Because by keeping only the best stock you obtain the *greatest weight of flesh at smallest cost.** You also procure the largest number of eggs by only keeping a breed that are known to be precocious and constant (or every-day) layers.

Q. Why should pullet chickens *only* be hatched during the months of March and April?

A. Because by so doing these pullets will lay through the winter, when eggs are most scarce and valuable.† The chickens only require to be kept six months before they begin to make a return by their eggs, and they will continue to lay through the following summer, laying consecutively for twelve months. The earlier chickens are hatched, the better they thrive, getting through their moult in the warm weather, and having the *entire* summer to hasten them to maturity.

Q. Why are not pullet chickens, hatched later in the summer, equally profitable?

A. Because they require to be kept four months *longer* than earlier hatched chickens, before they make a return by their eggs, not beginning to lay before the following spring or summer, at which time eggs are cheap and less profitable. They can also only lay for six months, before the moulting and winter season comes upon them, reducing the number and value of their eggs by *one-half*.

Q. Why are old fowls unprofitable to keep?

A. Because they are not in a condition to lay through the moulting season; and as they moult later and more severely every year, but very few (if any) eggs are procured from them through the winter, during which time they have to be fed, making no return. Their flesh is also of little value when killed and disposed of.

Q. Why should cockerels be killed at four months old?

A. Because up to this time they have cost but little to keep, and are generally plump and well-shaped. After this their appetites become voracious, and their bodies lean and lank, with deficiency of breast

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* Large, well-bred fowls do not consume more food than ravenous, mongrel breeds. It is the same with fowls as with other stock. I have at this moment two store pigs, one highly bred, the other a rough, ill-bred animal. They have, since they left their mothers, been fed together and upon the same food. The former, I am confident (from observation), ate considerably less than the latter, which was particularly ravenous. The former pig, however, is in excellent condition, kind, and in a measure fat; whereas the latter looks hard, starved, and thin, and I am sure she will require one-third more food to make bacon of.

† It is the *nature* of fowls to commence to lay at a *certain* age, no matter what the season or weather may be. The age depends on the breed, some breeds being more precocious than others. Hamburghs often commence at five months,

meat. They also become rakish and turbulent in spirit. If not killed at this age, they must be kept until they are full-grown, when it will be found they have consumed as much food as their carcase is worth. There is also the advantage of a quick return, making room for several successions throughout the summer.

Q. Why are large, well-bred fowls more profitable for fattening than smaller kinds?

A. Because they come earlier to maturity, and you have growth and fattening going on at the same time; and as fowls are sold by their size and weight, there is great advantage in acquiring weight by growth as well as by fattening. Large fowls consume but little more than small ones.*

Q. Why is it necessary that fowls should be liberally † and systematically fed, and comfortably housed?

A. Because fowls, like other stock, can only be reared profitably by bringing them *early to maturity*, either for the table or for the production of eggs; and nothing but a regular and liberal supply of the best food can accomplish this in the short space of time necessary to obtain the *earliest* and *largest* return from them.‡

Q. Why is it *absolutely necessary* that laying hens during the winter months should be *warmly* housed and fed on *stimulating* food? §

A. Because the carbon which, supplied in summer, goes to produce fat and eggs, is, in winter, required to supply the frame with heat; and unless this warmth is supplied in winter artificially, there is not sufficient to enable them to produce eggs. In the same way, the sti-

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* Pringle, Editor of the *Farmer*, writing of the ill-bred fowls one daily sees, says such worthless birds are the most voracious, and consume inconceivable quantities of food without turning it to any account; whereas the finest fowls, if reasonably treated, take in fat and flesh at comparatively little cost.

† The *trifling* daily cost for food is really absolutely *nothing* in proportion to the value of the egg produced, especially during the winter months (four or five eggs per week realizing 8d. or 10d., cost of food being about 1d.). It is the most *miserable, short-sighted* economy to keep fowls insufficiently fed. It is *impossible* for a fowl, unless well-fed, to support its frame, as well as daily void in an egg from one and a-half to two ounces of nourishing matter from its body.

‡ I make no deduction for time and attendance, because farmers' wives and cottagers are very well able to devote a little of their own time on caring such profitable stock without employing labour, and so reap the entire profits. A large number would, however, very well pay for a special attendant. I also make no deduction for deaths of chickens, because, supposing four to die out of each brood before the age of eight weeks, the loss is but 3d. or 4d. each; and what is this out of the 16s. profit realised by each bird that lives?

§ A fowl-house may be very cheaply heated with either coal or coke, and where there is a pigeon-loft over the same, heating will answer for both. I have a small circular stove which cost me 12s. 6d. (and which I can carry about as easily as a stable bucket), and with this I am able to heat my fowl-house and pigeon-loft over, each of which measures five feet by ten. The cost for fuel (coal dust) does not exceed ½d. per 12 hours, and it can be kept in with but little attention from day to day. The particulars of this and other suitable stoves for fowl-houses will be found on cover of the complete work. Such a stove will enable your pigeons to lay and hatch throughout the winter, and your fowls to be productive in eggs.

mulating food produced naturally in the summer by worms, slugs, caterpillars, flies, grubs, &c., must be artificially supplied by meat, or other stimulating food, during the winter months.

Q. Why should eggs be within the command of the poorest of the land throughout the year?

A. Because (as shown in page 7) *they are produced at a cost of* 1*d. per dozen—i.e.*, the value of the hen when killed in the autumn, together with the value of her excrements, will pay the whole cost of her keep during the eleven months she is producing 186 eggs; these eggs, therefore, debited at 1d. per dozen,* realize 1s. 4d., which amount as nearly as possible pays the cost of rearing the chicken or pullet to the time she produces the eggs.

Q. Why should a fine fat chicken be within the reach of the poor as well as the rich?

A. Because (as shown in page 8) it only costs 1s. 4d. to produce a fine cockerel, weighing 4½ lbs., which, with the value of his excrements, is less than 3d. per lb.

Q. Why should fowls be specially advantageous to be kept by small farmers and cottagers?

A. Because they return a sure and certain profit, and without the risk attending other stock, involving little or no outlay in capital, and only requiring that care and attention which such people can easily bestow upon them; besides, both fowls and eggs always command a good and ready market, and an immediate return.‡

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* It is with a feeling of shame one considers, that at a time when one-twelfth of our population are either paupers or on the verge of pauperism, we *daily import* considerably over one million and a-half of eggs from abroad, besides *thousands of tons* of poultry, when it can be demonstrated beyond the power of contradiction that any cottager at home can earn an easy and honest living by keeping a few fowls, involving the use of little or no capital.

† There may be many who will doubt the possibility of producing fowls at 3d. per lb.; so did I until I tried it. I have just weighed two Brahma Dorkings about four months old, and I find them each to be nearly 6 lbs. live weight, and I can venture to assert most positively, they have not cost me, directly or indirectly, 1s. 3d. each (or 3d. per lb.) up to this time. I will leave the reader to say what *such* a chicken will command where he or she may be located; but I for myself can safely say, that in London or any large town such a fowl will realize 9d. per lb. (or 4s. 6d.), which would leave the handsome profit of over 200 per cent. in four months, after paying all expenses. I should like to know where is the farmer who can purchase or breed other stock, and realize 250 per cent. in four months. I will not say 250 per cent., but where can he realize 25 per cent. in the time? It is a national waste importing eggs by the hundreds of millions, and poultry by tens of thousands, when we are feeding our cattle upon corn, and grudging it to our poultry; although the return made from the former, it is generally admitted, is not 5 per cent. beyond the value of the corn consumed, whereas an immense percentage can be realized by feeding poultry.

‡ Those who can should grow their own "buckwheat." This year I obtained (without manure) 40 bushels to the acre, on very poor sandy soil, that would not have produced 18 bushels of oats. The seed is angular in form, not unlike hemp-seed; it is stimulating, from the quantity of spirit it contains, and is largely used in France to feed poultry.

BREEDS RECOMMENDED.

A most important point in the profitable keeping of fowls is a wise selection of stock, and on this head I will say a few words :—

For the purpose of obtaining table birds (*i.e.*, for the production of meat) in this somewhat variable climate of ours, I can from experience strongly recommend the "Brahma Pootra," or, what I find even better, a cross between the Brahma cock and the Dorking hen.* By this cross both size and delicacy is obtained, besides additional strength of constitution, imparted to the chickens through the Brahma, and as egg-layers they are not easily surpassed.

The "Houdan" and "Creve Cœur" are not to be surpassed for extreme delicacy and precocity in putting on flesh. These breeds may with advantage be crossed with the Brahma cock, to gain size and strength of constitution to suit our climate.

For the production of eggs, in quantity and quality, if not in size, *nothing* can surpass the "Hamburgh" breed; and of this class the silver-spangled are perhaps the best, their eggs being the largest in size; they seldom or ever show any disposition to sit, and have earned the well-merited name of "everlasting layers." The Golden Hamburghs (or pheasant fowl) are also excellent, and of great beauty. This breed is hardy, but will not tolerate confinement.

To increase the size of the frame of the Silver Hamburgh, as well as the size of the egg, I should recommend a cross with the "Houdan" cock as least likely to deteriorate its egg-producing powers.

Brahmas and Cochins are good layers, *especially* in winter. Polands and Spanish excel as summer layers.

For *combining* size and excellence of flesh with egg-producing powers in the same breed, nothing can surpass the Houdan.

The Dorking is a capital table bird, but very variable as a layer; this breed only thrive on a dry soil; the chickens are also delicate, and difficult to rear. For strength of constitution, as chickens and as fowls, nothing can surpass the "Brahma Pootras."

Cochins for the table are awkward, ill-shaped birds, and too much disposed to fatten internally, rather than externally; they are also troublesome, from their constant desire to sit; they are, however, like the Brahmas and Creve Cœur, suitable when close confinement is indispensable.

No farmer or cottager, having an extended grass run, can possibly err in keeping a stock of Brahmas, Houdans, and Hamburghs, all of which are hardy and good at scratching for themselves; the former are large and excellent table birds and good winter layers; the latter are the most prolific of all layers, and when crossed with the Houdan cock are good-sized and excellent as table birds.

* I lately sent to market one of these cross-bred fowls, which weighed 8½ lbs., killed straight from the farm-yard unfatted.

GENERAL INFORMATION.

It is *necessary* that fowls should have means of shelter in the wet and rough weather of winter, and intense heat of summer. Fowls kept in close confinement cannot thrive without a supply of gravel, lime in some form, a dust-hole,* and a constant supply of fresh water, as well as hard, soft, and green food, and in winter the addition of animal food; and if you desire them to lay, they must be *young, warmly housed, fed liberally*, and with *stimulating* food.

Meat is essential to promote egg-laying in winter. As a *rule* it should be cooked, although it is more stimulating given raw. Horse-flesh cannot be surpassed for excellence when it can be obtained, and even when given in quantity it does not impart the *slightest* flavour to the eggs. Nothing but gross prejudice and ignorance prevents the more general use of horse-flesh for this purpose, thousands of horses being annually destroyed and buried, the flesh of which should realize £3 or £4, at 2d. per lb. A mincing or sausage machine is the best mode of preparing the meat when cooked.

Large and heavy fowls *require* a low perch to roost upon, and it should be flat or square in form, and not round.

Fowls wishing to sit may have that desire removed by confining them in a box or tub, to the exclusion of all light, *but not air*, and keeping them for two days and nights without food or water, and in stubborn cases, three days may be necessary. This treatment is far less cruel than any other I have heard of or seen.

New-laid eggs may be retained *perfectly* fresh for at least two or three months by closing the pores of the shell; this may be done by rubbing them directly they are laid with an oiled or buttered cloth.

One cock is sufficient to run with 30 hens, except where eggs are required for hatching purposes; then only 6 hens should be allowed to 1 cock. A cock is in his prime from the age of 15 months to the close of his third year.

It is wise, in feeding fowls, to give as great a variety of food as possible, making some slight change at least every week, substituting one food for another at different times. It is essential to feed fowls at least twice a day if you expect them to lay.

Kill at once, rather than attempt to cure, fowls showing symptoms of disease, and so save their carcases, and the risk of infection.

Sponge soaked in honey and baked in an oven is a cheap and deadly rat poison.

There is no disadvantage in a fowl-house being small, and the fowls closely packed, provided it is well-ventilated *at the top* and kept scrupulously clean; indeed, in winter it is an advantage, as the heat

* Flower of sulphur should be sprinkled in the dust-hole to destroy the vermin and parasites which infest fowls. A ball, or nest-egg, of sulphur may also be placed in their nest for the same object. No fowl can thrive that is irritated with vermin.

the fowls generate among themselves will keep up a proper temperature.

A daily sprinkling of dry earth effectually deodorises the excrements of fowls, and obviates the necessity of constant cleaning their houses.

Fowls should *never* be fed at the front or back door of any house or cottage; by *only* feeding them away from the house at regular stated times, they will in the interval amuse themselves by searching about for food, instead of causing dirt and inconvenience by a perpetual begging at the door of your dwelling.

Practically, it is as little trouble to keep two dozen fowls or so, as five or six, and where a good run is available, a number should be kept.

A single cross (judiciously done) is rather beneficial than otherwise, as it increases the stamina of the offspring; but, as a rule, never breed from the cross, or you at once degenerate.

In conclusion, the Author has to say that he will be glad to afford information as to where good stock birds or eggs for hatching can be obtained at a moderate cost.

Through the medium of advertising, I can recommend the columns of the *Exchange and Mart*, as a ready and cheap means for the purchase or disposal of Poultry.

I may mention the fact, that during the last severe month of December, I have obtained from twelve March and April pullets 285 eggs. The cost of maintaining these fowls, together with cost of fuel, has been exactly 5s. 7½d., and the value of these eggs at market price amounts to £2 7s. 6d., which leaves me a profit at the rate of 800 per cent. on the cost of their keep during the month; and this return being the result of the birds being *of selected stock*, *young*, *warmly* housed, fed *liberally*, and on *stimulating* food.

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